

Jaguar Conservation Team (JAGCT) Summary Notes
Best Western Inn, Willcox, Arizona
January 20, 2003

Introduction

Meeting was called to order by Bill Van Pelt, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) at 9:07 a.m. All in attendance introduced themselves and the organizations they represent.

A. Opening comments and ground rules

Ground rules were the same as previous meetings. Participants were asked to raise their hand to ask a question or state an opinion. One person speaking at a time, with no side conversations. This allows each person to be heard and keeps the meeting moving through the agenda. Participants in the Jaguar Working Group (JAGWG) (i.e. everyone present at JAGCT meetings) may comment and are encouraged to do so on any issue being discussed at the JAGCT meeting. Participants were asked to turn cellular telephones and beepers off or set on vibrate.

B. Agenda Review/Additional Discussion Points

Order of agenda was changed to allow Education Committee to conduct their presentation first because of classroom participation.

Additions to the agenda included:

Clarification of the Defenders of Wildlife Carnivore Fund

Outreach Report

Discussion of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Discussion re: JAGCT sending a letter to the INS/Border Patrol regarding the 2003 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Arizona-Mexico Border

C. Discussion of summary notes from the July 2002 JAGCT meeting

Except for the clarification of the Defenders of Wildlife Proactive Carnivore Fund, no additional comments on the July 2002 summary notes were provided. Action items were reviewed. No outstanding action items were identified. Additional Sighting Brochures were available for distribution within local communities.

Defenders of Wildlife Proactive Carnivore Fund – The July 2002 meeting notes inadvertently implied that the DOW Proactive Carnivore Fund could be used to reimburse landowners for livestock predation by jaguars. However, this fund is specifically available to assist landowners by providing funding for innovative programs or management actions that can reduce predator/livestock conflicts. The Malpai Borderlands Group has established funding to reimburse livestock owners for direct loss of livestock resulting from jaguars.

D. Classroom Presentations – Pearce Elementary School and Washington Elementary School

The 4th and 5th Grade classes from Pearce Elementary School gave a presentation based on the pilot-program provided by the Education Committee. The presentation covered basic life history, distribution/range, physiology, and threats. The presentation was well received by the Team. One criticism of the presentation was that the students did not present all view points associated with jaguars and jaguar conservation, i.e. the threats they identified contained some implied threats such as identifying ranchers as killing jaguars. Ms. Fields explained that the information presented was located within the research materials available to the students, and the students identified a number of threats associated with jaguars, not just the *implied* threat.

Margery Webb, Washington Elementary School, presented material on her 5th grade class's participation in the pilot-program. Very similar to Pearce Elementary School, these students found most of the available information to be at a higher learning level than for 5th grade students. Students enjoyed the video recordings, *Eyes of Fire* book, and the hands-on skulls. Ms. Webb was able to find some additional sources for information and incorporated these into her lesson. Some of these included Internet sites, jaguar sound wav-files, and additional books regarding large cats. A handout of her presentation was provided.

E. Task Reports:

1. Update on AZ-NM sightings - Chuck Hayes and Tim Snow

New Mexico - No new sightings have been investigated since the last meeting.

Arizona – Twelve reports were received since the last meeting. The majority of these continue to be large black cat sightings. No Class I sightings were reported.

2. Kill Verification Activities (Section 5.H.2.) – Jack Childs

We have not received any reports of domestic livestock suspected of being killed by jaguars. Investigations of cattle killed by jaguars in Mexico are very consistent with the information gathered in Brazil during the creation of the tracking guidelines book, *Tracking the Felids of the Borderlands*. Because mountain lions have similar kill characteristics, all evidence must be thoroughly reviewed while conducting any investigations, including tracks, bite marks, hair, etc.

A draft depredation letter was distributed. The letter informs ranching community about jaguar depredation including Conservation Team efforts. Please do not distribute until finalized.

Action Item: Depredation Committee is asked to review the H. Quigley protocol, which was distributed to committee members.

3. Habitat Identification (Section 5.A.) – Chuck Hayes and Bill Van Pelt

New Mexico – Chuck Hayes presented habitat maps for New Mexico. The New Mexico group

has made some modifications to the criteria established by the Habitat Sub-committee in an effort to better fit the model to New Mexico. Comments can be made for individual maps or on the composite map. Please provide comments to Chuck Hayes.

Arizona –Vegetative parameters used were from GAP analysis. These should be similar to *Brown Lowe Pase*, referenced by the sub-committee. In addition, our analysis of sightings/records within 10 km from water did not differ from sites within 16 km (recommended criteria by the Sub-committee). Therefore, the report will not be modified to 16 km. Report should be available on the AGFD web-site (www.azgfd.com). Additional comments are needed by August 1, with a goal to distribute the final report to the Conservation Team as a whole by October 1.

4. Legal Protection (Section 7.A. and B.) – Chuck Hayes

Nothing new to report.

5. Education (Section 6.B.) – Karen Schedler

Education Curriculum. The Education Curriculum meets current environmental education models, meeting the 4 major standards (Science, Math, Social Studies, and Language Arts). A mini-unit was devised, using 6 key lessons from the big unit. The mini-units include assessments. These are not as rigorous as the big unit, but feasible to do and more user friendly.

Resource kits/trunks. The Malpai Borderlands Group donated/presented a check for \$2843 to the Conservation Team to help with costs for education materials.

We are still in need of locations to house the Jaguar Education Trunks. We would like these to be housed in the rural communities as opposed to the AGFD Regional Office. One suggestion is to use the NRCDC Resource Centers. Keep in mind that a kit/trunk facilitator will be needed to coordinate scheduling and ensure contents are maintained.

Each kit contains 4 replicated skulls (jaguar, bobcat, mountain lion, domestic cat); mapping exercise with range maps, precipitation maps, vegetation maps, and jaguar distribution maps; literature comparisons including cultural attitudes and comparisons of past and present lion hunters; changing land use patterns; history of jaguar conservation; and activities in developing conservation strategies, i.e. group processes, identifying areas, etc.

Action Item: Thanking the Malpai Borderlands Group for their contribution.

6. End of the Year Report (Section 8.A.) – Bill VanPelt

Not finalized. The report will be a compilation of 2001-2002 efforts.

E. Other Business

1. Mexico Update – No representatives from Mexico. However, the New Mexico Cattle Growers have been working with Mexico ranchers (Chihuahua), looking at livestock management practices, drought issues, etc. Discussions have included jaguar conservation efforts.
2. Outreach Committee – Scotty Johnson

The outreach effort includes a presentation on the Conservation Team and Jaguar Conservation, followed by a question and answer session of Jaguar Conservation Team members. The panels have included federal and state agencies, NGO's, and private landowners.

Additional outreach efforts include producing brochures in Spanish and creating a press package for future sightings, which will include names of contact persons.

3. Memorandum of Agreement – The MOA was for a period of 5 years from date of final signature. Therefore, the AGFD would like to initiate discussion on extending the MOA. Discussion will continue at the July Jaguar Conservation Team meeting.
4. INS/Border Patrol's 2003 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement – A concern was raised regarding the INS/Border Patrol's proposed border developments, which include an extensive 15 ft. fence, 24-hour lighting, new roads, and other items that may pose serious threats to potential jaguar connectivity routes between the United States and Mexico. The EIS fails to address potential impacts on jaguars. After some discussion, the Conservation Team agreed to send INS a copy of the recently completed AGFD report on potentially suitable habitat for jaguars and offer assistance in identifying key landscape linkages between Mexico and the United States.

Action Item: Bill Van Pelt will draft a letter to send to INS regarding the Conservation Team's concerns and send the letter and copy of the AGFD report to INS. Copies of the letter will be forwarded to the Conservation Team with the meeting notes.

F. Close Meeting

The next meeting will be held in Animas, New Mexico. Tentative date will be either July 24 or 31. Final date and location will be included in the final notes. The meeting adjourned at 12:13 PM.